

‘Making Beaumont the best it can be’

Beaumont native gives back to community any way she can



Becky Mason poses with her family at Mason Construction.



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Becky Mason says that by putting back into their community, “it gives a richness to the experience of the people who live here.”

BY COURTNEY PEDERSEN
STAFF WRITER

Becky Mason, a Beaumont native, has worked with pretty much every non-profit in Beaumont.

She’s held positions from Rotary Club of Beaumont President to her current one as Lamar University Foundation Chair. She’s been a part of Beaumont Junior League, United Way and so many more.

“I just feel a real commitment to making Beaumont the best it can be so that we can make sure that our kids want to come back and be a part of the community,” Mason said.

In addition to her nonprofit work, Mason has also spent several years working at Mason Construction, which was started by her late husband Chuck’s grandfather in 1939.

The Enterprise spoke with Mason about her work with Mason Construction and her community involvement.

Q: What roles have you had in Mason Construction over the years?

A: In the early 1990s, it was a time where Mason (Construction) had a very small office staff, and they had like one lady in there, and so (my husband) Chuck needed some help, and he asked me to come out and answer the phone and do some typing and general stuff like that. I did that for a short time.

Once our kids were going into middle school and they were getting very busy and didn’t need me around as much, I started working again. At that time, it wasn’t long after that that OSHA started requiring a lot of safety information and the whole safety program ... That was where I really became a part of the company, because I had an education background, and so it was a very natural thing for me. I helped train our employees. Over the years, training got more and more important, and my education background was really, really helpful on that. So, I helped develop the safety training program. That was my role — the safety administrator.

Q: What is it like being a part of a family/family business that is so well known and integrated into the community

A: Well back then, we weren’t that well known, but I’m proud. I’m just so proud that the current generation is going strong. A couple years ago, they had like 500 employees. Well, I can remember when we celebrated that we had 200 employees, and it’s just grown and grown. When my husband and his brother were getting close to retirement age, they brought in some consultants and talked about business planning

and all that. They said emphatically that family-run businesses don't last past the third generation, and that got our attention.

From the beginning, it wasn't ever an intention that it would last for a long time. But once you put so much time and effort into it and you see how all the people have jobs because of Mason Construction and the impact that it's had on people's lives, you just want it to want it to keep going and want it to continue to be successful.

So, I was very proud that I had a part, a small part, in making that happen. It was kind of like right place, right time, because at some point I would never have imagined that there would be a place for me in Mason Construction and it's just evolved. It's become a much more complex organization, and they've done things that that we never would have imagined. I know that (my husband) Chuck is very, very, very proud, and he's looking down on us, very proud with how the next generation has really been great.

Q: What has been your favorite part of Rotary over the years?

A: My favorite part of Rotary over the years is the people that I've gotten to meet and to work with, and we've gone on and been involved beyond the local level and we know people. We went to a lot of the international conventions. So, we would meet people and make friends wherever we went, and Rotarians are just friendly people. Everybody is focused on meeting people and finding ways to work together to address the problems that they see in their communities or around the world. It's been a really rich experience for me because the many, many close friends I have from all over the world. It's really special.

Q: Why do you believe it is important to give back to the community you live in?

A: I feel like I've had a wonderful life in Beaumont, and I want to make sure that it continues for my family, my kids, my grandkids, my friends' families that come along. So, many people when they graduate from college, they move away to Houston or Dallas or somewhere else, and because of the family business, (my son) Chad moved back to

Beaumont, and I'm so thankful for that, but there's just not a lot out there drawing people back.

I just feel a real commitment to making Beaumont the best it can be so that we can make sure that our kids want to come back and be a part of the community. Even though we're, population-wise, not a big city, if you look at the organizations in the city, there's really a lot of them. The people who are involved in supporting them and making them happen are pretty busy, because there's a lot to do, but because we have ... people who are willing to put back into their community, it gives a richness to the experience of the people who live here.

Q: What is your favorite thing about/what keeps you in Southeast Texas?

A: The people. This is from my heart. When (my husband) Chuck passed away about a year and a half ago, and my sister passed away a year ago, losing both of them within a short period of time was very difficult. The outpouring of support was just amazing. I couldn't have made it through without so many people holding me up. I know in bigger cities, you have your own group of friends and everything, but I was just overwhelmed by the kindness and the love and the support that I have received during a tough time.

Q: What are some of your favorite things to do in Southeast Texas?

A: I like to sing and so Dr. James Han out at Lamar is the choral music director, and so we've started a Rotary Chorus. It doesn't just have to be Rotary members. We sing for Christmas, but we've also started getting together and just singing because it's so much fun. I love having people over in my home. My home was built a long time ago, but it was built for acoustics. Dr. Han says that that my house has better acoustics than any of the concert spaces at Lamar and he loves to sing here, to direct the chorus here. So, that's probably my all time favorite. Then, of course, having my family around and doing things with them is wonderful.

Q: What life advice would you give your younger self?

A: Get involved in everything that interests you. I'm trying to think of the song ("Love is Something if You Give it Away") and that's kind of my philosophy — give of yourself, and it feels good and it brings back good things, too.